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ABSTRACT

This curriculum outline presents the components of an introductory course to French culture which focuses on the colonization of French Polynesia. First, the general goals and student objectives for the course, which focuses on different historical periods of French Polynesia, are discussed. Next, the pre-test to determine students knowledge of French Polynesia is presented; an introduction to the Asian Studies module that lists the different territories of France follows. The outline and lecture notes are then provided for the following elements of Polynesian history: (1) prehistoric settlement of the islands; (2) society in the era before contact with Europeans is made, focusing on the political system and governance, religion, and Polynesian society; (3) Polynesia after European contact; (4) missionaries; (5) changes in Polynesian society due to European explorers and missionaries, including changes in governance, dress, and population; (6) Pomare chiefs and queens; (7) the French protectorate; (8) the colonization in 1880; and (9) the shift to an overseas French territory in 1957. The remainder of the outline highlights the method for evaluating student achievement, lists discussion and study questions, illustrates activities and strategies for presenting course materials, lists audiovisual materials, and summarizes a comparison and contrast of Hawaii and French Polynesia. Contains a bibliography. (TGI)

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ED 407 967

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

"FRENCH POLYNESIA"

Use In: Introduction to French Culture

BY

JOANN OUTS

Asian Studies Module

St. Louis Community College at Meramec

JC 970 295

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Fre 115: Introduction to French Culture
Asian Studies Module: French Polynesia

I. General Goal

In this course where the purpose is to learn/understand the tenets of French culture, it is desirous to extend the scope beyond the border of metropolitan France. Since France colonized many parts of the world and thus spread the French language and culture to several continents and to both hemispheres, students of this course should have a rudimentary knowledge of one of these areas where the French presence is in evidence today. A study of French Polynesia, a French colony since 1880 and a French overseas territory since 1957, can accomplish that goal.

II. Student Objectives

- Students should be able to name and locate on a map the five island groups that comprise French Polynesia.

- **Prehistoric era:** Students will be able to identify the people who were the original settlers on these islands and know when they arrived there.

- **Pre-European Contact:** Students will be able to describe major characteristics of life, including the system of governance, the religious beliefs (gods, legends, sacred ground, and religious practices) and certain social features (sexual practices, the *arioi* society).

- **Post-European Contact:** Students will be able to describe what changes were wrought in these islands because of the arrival, first of the explorers, and later of the missionaries. The students should be able to describe the struggle of France against the influence of England for control of these islands and the events leading up to the naming of Tahiti as a French protectorate.

After 1957- The students should be able to identify France's relationship with French Polynesia since this date and what the present status is in the late twentieth century.

III. **Pre-test**

Questions which can be used in an oral or written format to elicit students' knowledge of French Polynesia:

1. Can you name any one of the islands or any one of the island groups of French Polynesia?

2. Where are the islands located?

3. What is the formal relationship between France and French Polynesia?

4. Can you tell me how long the French presence has been felt in French Polynesia?

5. Can you name any island of the greater Polynesia?

IV. **Introduction to Asian Studies Module**

- Greater France includes the overseas departments and territories. The inhabitants there vote in national elections and are represented in the French parliament. The departments have close ties with France, but the overseas territories have more autonomy.

- The overseas departments are Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean Sea, French Guiana on the northeast coast of South America, the Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean, Mayotte Island off the eastern coast of Madagascar, and St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands off the coast of Newfoundland.

- The overseas territories are New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Vanuatu (New Hebrides), the islands of Wallis and Futuna, and the French Southern and Antarctic islands of Crozet, Kerquelen, St. Paul, and Amsterdam.

- Many colonies were formed by the French in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The Louisiana Purchase puts us mid-Westerners in a former French colony. Most of these colonies have been given their independence, which was granted peacefully or won after a bloody confrontation. The last of these fierce battles was the Algerian War ending with independence for Algeria in 1962.

- We will study for the next two weeks one of these French territories, French Polynesia. The Society Islands are the most populated of the five island groups and it is this group where we will concentrate our studies. The best known of this group is Tahiti. The four other island groups are the Marquesas Islands to the far northeast of the Society Islands and the Tuamotu Archipelago to the near northeast; to the southeast of the Society Islands are the Gambier Islands and to the south are the Austral Islands. These last two island groups have few permanent inhabitants. The best known Austral Island is Tubuai, and the Gambier Islands are where the French government conducted their nuclear testing on the atoll of Mururoa.

- Pass out 3 maps of French Polynesia. One map shows the five island groups and one shows the Polynesian Triangle. The third shows greater Polynesia as an octopus according to the island tradition with long tentacles extending to all the islands.

V. Outline with Lecture Notes

A. Prehistoric settlement

Original settlers from southeast Asia (South China and Formosa, which we call Taiwan today) arrived in Polynesia, 2500 BC-2200 BC.
They first went to Figi, Tonga, and Samoa, and after 500 years or so, they left to settle the Marquesas, the Society Islands, and the Tuamotu Islands.

B. Society Islands - precontact with Europeans

1. Political system (governance)

a. The chief and his powers and limitations, his dress, and his *marae*
b. The clans and conflicts between clans (pass out map showing clans on Tahiti)
c. The laws of inheritance
d. Social rank dictated by genealogy

2. Religion

a. The original god who created the skies and the earth and the lesser gods - the traits of these gods
b. religious practices
c. *mana* - a desirable trait including wisdom, compassion, firmness, persuasiveness, and understanding possessed by man and gods in varying amounts - ways of acquiring *mana*
d. religious legends and myths often involving gods
e. significance of Raiatea Island and its unique flower
f. human sacrifice and cannibalism

3. Polynesian Society

a. no money
b. no written language
c. sexual practices
d. food
e. dress and tapa cloth
f. the *arioi* society - why it was formed and its practices
g. houses and pandanus leaves

C. Post-European contact - the explorers

1. Samual Wallis - 1767 - first European explorer of Tahiti and lieutenant in British Navy - moored in the northern port of Matavai Bay

2. Louis de Bougainville - 1768 - aid to French commander Montcalm in Quebec

3. James Cook - sent by British Royal Society

   a. first visit 1769 - stay of three months - mission was to chart the transit of Venus over the sun on June 3, 1769
   b. second visit 1772-75
   c. third visit 1777 - Captain William Bligh, Cook's sailing master

D. Missionaries

1. London Missionary Society

   a. first group arrived 1797
   b. William Ellis - 1816
   c. John Orsmond - 1817 - recorder of Polynesian culture - contributed to dictionary of Tahitian language published by the Society in 1851
   d. John Williams - 1817
   e. difficulties to get the Polynesians to accept Christianity
   f. later missionaries including George Pritchard - 1824

E. Changes in Polynesian society due to European explorers and missionaries

1. Changes in governance system

   a. red girdle of the chief is replaced
   b. chiefs of equal power replaced by supreme chief over all of Tahiti

2. Changes in dress, nudity, and sexual practices
3. Polynesian idols burned
4. Disease and resulting population decline

F. Pomare chiefs and queens

1. 1791 Pomare I (supreme chief Tu)

2. 1803 Pomare II (son of Pomare I, also called Tu)

3. 1821 Pomare III (King Teriitaria)
4. 1827 Pomare IV (Queen Aimata)
5. 1878 Pomare V (Arii Aue)

G. French protectorate

1. events leading to Tahiti becoming a French protectorate
   a. Dupetit Thouars vs. Queen Pomare
   b. three demands Dupetit made to the queen
   c. Queen pays $1000 Spanish dollars to Dupetit
   d. Queen's flag vs. French flag
   e. 1837 - law makes marriages between French and Polynesians illegal

2. Struggle of French Catholicism vs. English Protestantism

3. Treaty of Jarnac - 1847 - agreement by France and England on the neutrality of the leeward islands (Raiatea, Tahaa, Huahine, and Bora Bora)

4. Protectorate declared - 1847 - Queen Pomare signs agreement after almost three years of self-exile on Raiatea

H. French colony - 1880

1. Pomare V signs agreement making the windward islands of the Society group a French colony (the windward group consists of Tahiti, Moorea, and three other small islands)

   a. pensions granted to the Polynesians
   b. other concessions made by the French

2. Leeward islands become a French protectorate - 1888

3. France annexes the leeward islands to the colony - 1898

I. French overseas territory - 1957

1. Nuclear testing in 1966 to continue until January 1996
2. Movement for independence - referendum in 1959, 36% of people in France Polynesia voted for independence
3. Economy - tourism, French military spending
4. Exports - coconut oil and cultured pearls (especially black ones)
5. 1977 and again in 1984 local administration given greater powers
6. Possible changes in future due to end of nuclear testing

VI. **Evaluation of student achievement - test**

A. maps - identify on a map the five island groups that comprise French Polynesia

B. What is the capital city?

C. Where did the original settlers of Polynesia come from? When did they leave their native country to discover Polynesia? (give approximate date and indicate BC or AD)

D. Essay questions - you must answer No. 4 and two of the other questions of your choice

1. Name the three important European explorers of French Polynesia, give the year of their visits, and discuss the contributions of each.

2. What organization sponsored missionaries to christianize French Polynesia? Name the three missionaries who established themselves in Tahiti in 1816 and 1817 and recount their successes and/or failures giving a few specific incidences involving the Polynesians.

3. What were the religious beliefs of the Polynesians before contact with the missionaries? Discuss the original creator, the gods, the religious beliefs, *mana*, the religious ceremonies and practices, and the individual's relationship with the gods.

4. Describe the governance/social system of French Polynesia before the arrival of the Europeans and contrast that with the changes brought about by the arrival of the European explorers and missionaries. Include in your discussion who had power and prestige and why, the ancient Polynesian customs or traditions that were eroding, and changes in daily life like dress, festivities, health, and weapons.

E. Identify six of the following:

1. *arii*
2. *tiare apetahi*
3. *arioi* society
4. *marae*
5. temehani
6. *tapu*
7. *tatu*

8. taaroa
9. La Nouvelle Cythere

VII. Discussion and Study Questions

A. Prehistoric settlement

1. Who were the original settlers of Polynesia? When did they come? Which islands were the first to be settled?

B. Society Islands - before European contact

1. Describe the governance system of chiefs and sub-chiefs. What were the powers of the chief?
2. Why were raids made by one clan on a neighboring clan? How were conflicts between clans resolved?
3. What was the importance of the *marae*?
4. When were the chiefly powers transferred to an heir?
5. What was the red girdle? How was it constructed?
6. Describe some of the religious beliefs of the Tahitians.
7. What is the importance of *mana* and how does one acquire it?
8. What is the religious significance of Raiatea?
9. Under what conditions did human sacrifice and cannibalism take place?
10. What are one or two religious myths or legends concerning the gods?
11. How was the Polynesian language unusual?
12. Why was the *arioi* society formed? How were some of their practices unusual? What did they do as they traveled around the islands together?
13. What were the sexual practices of the Tahitians?
14. What are some of the practices concerning marriage and death?

C. European explorers

1. Who were the first three Europeans to reach Tahiti and when did each arrive?
2. What were the contributions of each of the three?
3. Who was William Bligh?
4. What was the importance of Matavai Bay?

D. Missionaries

1. What was the name of the group who sent missionaries to French Polynesia?
2. What were the experiences and successes of missionaries Ellis, Orsmond, and Williams?
3. Why was it difficult to get the Polynesians to accept Christianity?
4. What were the experiences of Pritchard and some of the later missionaries?

E. Changes in Polynesian society due to European contact

1. What changes took place in the internal governance of Tahiti?
2. What was the effect of the contact between the Polynesian women and the crew members of the ships?
3. What were the changes in dress and sexual practices?
4. What was done to discourage the Polynesian religion?

F. Pomare chiefs and queens

1. Briefly summarize the ninety years or so of dominance of the Pomare chiefs and queens (Pomare I through Pomare V - 1791 to 1880 when Tahiti was declared a French colony)

G. French protectorate

1. Detail the conflict between Dupetit Thouars and Queen Pomare.

2. What were the feelings of the native population about the struggle of dominance between the French and the English for control of the island?
3. Concerning the conflict between Protestantism (England) and Catholicism (France), which one won over the Tahitian people?
4. What events led up to the declaration of Tahiti as a French protectorate? What is the date of the declaration?

H. French colony

1. When was the island of Tahiti declared a French territory?
2. In which of the five island groups did French nuclear testing take place? When did this testing end?
3. What industries are important to the island's economy?
4. Is there a movement for independence on the islands?

VIII. **Activities/Strategies for presenting material**

- The instructor can either assign sections and chapters from the source material that everyone must read and discuss in class or if the instructor would like to cover the material more fully, the class can be divided into groups of three and each group can be assigned a few topics to look up and report orally to the class in a mini-panel discussion.

- During the discussion on religion, the instructor may pass out some copies of one or two religious myths/legends among the many that are part of the Polynesian's lore.

- Reading assignments can be given for four periods of one hour twenty minutes each or for six periods of fifty minutes each. The test can be given in the class session following those sessions.

IX. **Audio-visual materials** - all located in Communications South Office 110.

- Overhead transparency (Raiatea)

- Videocassette (one 30-minute cassette on Tahiti and French Polynesia)

- Maps to give to each student (five maps: French Polynesia showing all five island groups, the Polynesian triangle, the Polynesian octopus, Raiatea, and Tahiti showing the divisions into clans)

- Filmstrip (one)

X. **Comparison and contrast of cultures**

Hawaii is a Polynesian settlement. The people there have a similar heritage, the same language, and share the same gods as in French Polynesia. Hawaii was settled well after the islands of French Polynesia, but when Polynesians arrived there, they spread their culture to yet another island. They even named the new island after the original name of Raiatea (Havaiki=Hawai'i).

XI. **Bibliography**

A. Student's bibliography

Christian, Frederick W. Eastern Pacific Lands: Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands. New York.

Crump, Donald J. Blue Horizons: Paradise Isles of the Pacific. Washington, D.C., 1985.

De Bovis, Edmond. Tahitian Society: Before The Arrival of the Europeans. Laie, Hawaii, 1976.

Dening, Greg. Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas, 1774-1880. Chicago, Illinois, 1989.

Parts of this book treat anthropological topics, but the explorers, the missionaries, and many aspects of daily life are treated at length. Part One covers 1774-1842 when Tahiti was named a French protectorate. Part Two covers 1842-1880 when Tahiti was named a French colony.

Ferdon, Edwin N. Early Tahiti As the Explorers Saw It. 1767-1797. Tucson, Arizona, 1981.

Levy, Robert I. Tahitians: Mind and Experience In the Society Islands. Chicago, Illinois, 1975.

Stanley, David. Tahiti-Polynesian Handbook. Chico, California, 1995.

B. Instructor's bibliography

Aldrich, Robert. France and the South Pacific Since 1940. Honolulu, Hawaii, 1993.

This book includes a good discussion in Chapter 4 on the population and societies of the French Pacific, but it includes all of the French Territories in the South Pacific in addition to Polynesia. Chapter 9 is on nuclear testing. Includes a bibliography.

Ferdon, Edwin. Early Observations of Marquesan Culture. 1595-1813. Tucson, Arizona, 1993.

This book gives a complete picture of life in the islands. Topics included are the houses, daily activities, the governing class, the religion, birth and death practices, warfare, the search for food, marriage, and body decorations such as tattoos. Bibliography included.

Henningham, Stephen. France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History. Honolulu, Hawaii, 1991.

Chapter 1 is the summary of the colonial post and it includes the other French islands of the South Pacific. French Polynesia is treated in Chapter 5 (1945-1982) and Chapter 6 (1983-1990). The latter chapter discusses the movement of French Polynesia toward greater autonomy.

There is a summary of the nuclear testing program in Chapter 7. Bibliography included.

Scarr, Deryck. The History of the Pacific Islands: Kingdoms of the Reefs. Concord, MA.

VIDEOCASSETTE. Tahiti and French Polynesia. Located in CS office 110.

Video is 32 minutes in length and is divided into three parts. The first two parts are similar, but the third part is on Moorea, Raiatea, and Bora Bora. The video is made from numerous still shots. Some history and cultural background is given.

NOTE: The following books are available at the St. Louis County Library (Headquarters).

Dodd, Edward. The Rape of Tahiti. New York, 1983.

This book contains a full account of the explorers, the missionaries, the Pomare chiefs, the progression towards the protectorate and finally the struggle with the native population until a colony was declared. In the appendix is the letter Queen Pomare wrote to Louis Philippe, King of France, asking him to disregard the treaty of September 9, 1842, because she had signed it out of fear.

Dodd, Edward. Polynesia's Sacred Isle. New York, 1976.

This book contains some good pictures and drawings. There are many accounts of Raiatea's myths and legends concerning the gods. The sacred isle is, in fact, Raiatea. There is a discussion of Mt. Temehani upon which the *tiare apetahi* flower grows. The *arioi* society is explained.

Suggs, Robert C. The Hidden Worlds of Polynesia. New York, 1962.

This book concerns the Marquesas Islands and gives information about their discovery by Alvaro de Mendana y Castro in 1596. Mendana and his crew were from Peru.

The first 61 pages give good cultural information on the islands. Most of the rest is of interest to archaeologists.

NOTE: The following book is available at Washington University Library.

Thomas, Nicolas. Marquesan Societies: Inequality and Political Transformation in Eastern Polynesia. Oxford, England, 1990.

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